

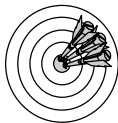
SFA: Through the Eyes of Students



Section Overview

In this section, you will view a short video highlighting the personal stories of individual students or former students as they talk about their student aid experience and the important role that student aid has played in their lives.

Following the video, there will be a short debrief, where you will get the opportunity to make a personal connection to what you have seen and heard.



Objectives

At the end of this section, you will:

- ⇒ See SFA from the student's perspective;
- ⇒ Understand the impact that SFA and student aid has had on students' lives;
- ⇒ Appreciate the importance of SFA's mission; and
- ⇒ Personally connect to the student's perspective.



Debrief of Student Stories Video

You have just watched a short video of several students talking about their experiences with federal student financial aid programs and how important such aid has been to their lives. What were your observations, reactions, and learnings from this video?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

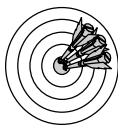
- ⇒ As you watched and listened to these students tell their stories, how did it make you feel as an SFA employee? Why?
- ⇒ To what extent has your life or that of someone you know been touched by student aid? What difference did it make in your/their life?
- ⇒ To what extent are students' voices prominent in your mind as you go about your day-to-day work?
- ⇒ What impact would it have on the way you do your work if students' voices were more prominent?
- ⇒ What could you do to keep students' voices more prominent in your own consciousness? What about in the collective consciousness of the agency?

The Heritage of SFA: Honoring the Past



Section Overview

This section is designed to give participants an understanding of the role student financial aid has played in educating the American public and thereby creating a stronger workforce. The section will give participants an understanding of the various types of federal student aid programs and their legislative beginnings, familiarize participants with current trends in student financial aid, and help participants connect emotionally to SFA's proud heritage.



Objectives

By the end of this section, participants will:

- ⇒ Understand the historical context of federal student aid legislation;
- ⇒ Understand trends in student financial aid and their implications for SFA; and
- ⇒ Understand the magnitude of the impact of SFA – sheer number of students receiving financial aid.



Activities

⇒ There is 1 exercise in this section:

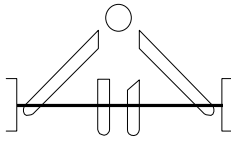
- Exercise 1 – “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?” game
- Exercise 2 - Lecturette – The Heritage of Student Financial Aid
- Exercise 3 - HeritageVideo



Key Information

⇒ As a federal agency, SFA's mission and the traditions that stem from that mission are rooted in legislation passed by Congress. Student aid legislation has a rich history. Understanding how and why student aid programs evolved the way they did will help reconnect you with the importance of your work in SFA. Important points in SFA history include:

- The Morrill Act of 1862
- The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 (otherwise known as the G.I. Bill)
- USSR launch of Sputnik – 1958
- Reforms of the Great Society – 1960's
- Increased aid to middle class families – late 1970's through today



Exercise # 1: Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?

Scenario

Imagine you are vying for a chance at the “hot seat” on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* Regis has put together a special program for this evening. In an effort to win viewers over from Survivor, all the questions he asks tonight will be geared toward the history and programs of the Office of Student Financial Aid. Regis is confident this program will be a success as he knows of no other legislated program that has affected the lives and families of so many.

If you or your team is not selected for the hot seat, you will be in the audience of the hottest game show in the world. Your participation will be required.

Lecturette: The Heritage of SFA

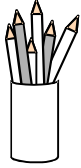
- **Power Point Presentation**

Activity # 3- Heritage Video



Debrief

⇒ To what extent does knowing the history/importance of financial aid in the US change your perception of the Office of Student Financial Assistance? How? Why?



Self Check

1. Which piece of legislation marked a radical change in how the US gave financial aid to education.

Answer: The GI Bill (Serviceman's Readjustment Act) Under the GI Bill students received direct financial assistance. Prior to the Bill, institutions rather than students received funding.

2. Since the passage of the GI Bill how has student financial aid changed.

Answer: At first, student aid was available only to low-income students. However as the cost of college increases, more aid has been made available to the middle class.

3. A major driver behind student financial aid legislation has been....

Answer: Workforce Preparation

SFA As A PBO: The Four Standards



Section Overview

In this section, you will review SFA's four standards and practice applying them to achieve performance excellence in your work.



Objectives

At the end of this section, you will:

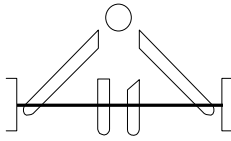
- ⇒ Understand the importance of SFA's four standards in SFA's transformation to a PBO; and
- ⇒ Understand how the four standards can be applied to achieve performance excellence in your work.



Key Information

- SFA's traditions are evolving as the agency undergoes its transformation to a PBO, or performance-based organization.
- SFA's performance excellence formula sets high objectives for SFA employees in the areas of customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and reduced unit costs.

- For performance excellence to become a reality, the actions and behaviors of every SFA employee must be guided by a set of four service standards developed by SFA senior leadership.
- In order of importance, the four standards are:
 - * Be worthy of trust (non-negotiable);
 - * Be courteous;
 - * Deliver great products and services; and
 - * Be efficient.



Exercise # 1: “Four Standards” Case Studies

In this exercise, each table of participants will be assigned a case study. The case study will present an SFA work situation where something has gone terribly wrong. Participants will be asked to address or resolve the situation by applying the four service standards.

Instructions:

1. Individually, first read the case study that has been assigned to your table.
2. Then, at your tables, as a group, discuss and decide what steps you would want to take to achieve performance excellence, applying the four standards. Write up your proposed steps on a flip chart and be ready to share with the large group.
3. Back in the large group, the facilitator will call on individual tables to share the steps they would take to address their case study situation. Your table should also be prepared to explain why you decided to take those steps based on the application of the four standards.



Debrief

⇒ As each table reports on what steps it should take to address the case study situation, consider the following:

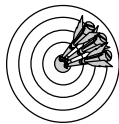
- What effect did the four standards have on your solutions?
- If everyone’s behavior and actions at SFA were guided by the four standards, what effect would that have on SFA as a federal agency? As a place to work?

Making A Difference: It Starts With Me



Section Overview

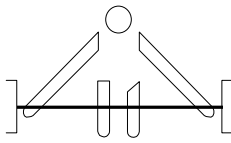
In this section, you will apply the four standards to your own work situation. You will craft your own personal pledge about what you plan to do to foster and uphold the four standards and share your pledge with those at your table.



Objectives

By the end of this section, you will:

- ⇒ Know how to apply the four standards to an SFA work situation to achieve performance excellence; and
- ⇒ Feel you have a personal stake in the transformation of SFA.

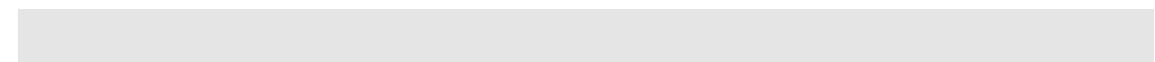


Exercise # 1: My Personal Pledge

For SFA to achieve performance excellence, it will require all SFA employees to be consciously aware of the four standards and to actively apply them in everyday work. In the previous exercise, you were asked to apply the four standards to a case study situation where things went wrong. In this exercise, you are being asked to personalize the application of the standards to your own situation.

⇒ Steps:

1. Ask yourself the following question: “What can I be doing to foster and uphold the four standards?”
2. Write down your answers .
3. Fit your answers into the following sentence: “I commit myself to fostering and upholding SFA’s four standards by taking the following actions: ...” List those actions.
4. Share your personal pledges with others at your table.



Wrap-Up, Evaluation and Graduation



Section Overview

In this section, each participant will first receive a certificate and a laminated card for completing the SFA Traditions course. Participants will then take part in a closing ceremony that makes them feel a common bond with their colleagues around the SFA mission and standards. Each participant will also be given the opportunity to provide feedback on how well the course met its objectives, what worked and what could have worked better.



Objectives

By the end of this section, you will:

- ⇒ Feel a common bond with your SFA colleagues around SFA's mission and standards.
- ⇒ Provide feedback on whether the course objectives were met, as well as what worked well and what could have worked better.

- ⇒ *The facilitators will hand out a certificate of completion and a laminated card to each participant, congratulating them on completing the course.*
- ⇒ *For the closing ceremony, each participant will be asked to think of the one word that, for them, captures the essence of their day's experience in the SFA Traditions course.*
- ⇒ *All participants will be asked to form a large circle in the room.*
- ⇒ *Starting with a volunteer and moving clockwise around the circle, the facilitators ask each participant to verbalize the one word to the group.*
- ⇒ *While still in the circle, the facilitators thank the participants for attending and ask them to please fill out the evaluation forms before they leave for the day.*